



Dulles Direct Newsletter

July 2014

Welcome to the July edition of the Dulles Direct Newsletter. I hope everyone is having an enjoyable summer—it seems to be flying by! The Board of Supervisors had a very busy month in July, but there are no meetings scheduled in August. I'll be using next month to get caught up on meetings and projects in the district, as well as planning some new initiatives for the fall.

Earlier this month, every household received a copy of my Fiscal Year 2014 Annual Report. I included as much information as I could about ongoing transportation projects and other issues. If you didn't see it in your mail, you can access the report online [here](#).

In this newsletter you'll find updates about public transit services, Bull Run Post Office Road, home daycares, and my thoughts on a rezoning that I believe was the worst vote the Board of Supervisors has taken in this term.

Metro Silver Line Grand Opening

Last week marked a momentous occasion for Northern Virginia with the beginning of the Silver Line Metro service. Thus far, Silver Line service has run smoothly and there is still space to park at the Wiehle Ave-Reston East Metro station.

The previous week, I had a chance to tour the new facility at Wiehle and represent Loudoun at a grand opening event held by Fairfax County. The Wiehle Avenue station has about 3,300 spaces and is serving as the largest bus transit hub in Fairfax County.

The Loudoun Board of Supervisors is planning a similar approach to our two stations, so I was very interested to see the parking garages and bus depot. As I mentioned last month, our Board is in negotiations with two private developers to construct three parking garages in Loudoun that will provide nearly 5,000 parking spaces.

Loudoun County Transit is serving the station from several locations – including a new location at Loudoun Station in Ashburn, which is near the Greenway/Loudoun County Parkway intersection. The service is utilizing brand new transit buses. We currently have five of these buses in the fleet, with more on the way.

I've been receiving a lot of questions about why Dulles South doesn't have service to Wiehle. First and foremost, I am in fact working to bring bus service to our area next year - more on that below. With the exception of Loudoun Station, which is being partially supported by a proffer, all of the park and ride lots with service to Wiehle Ave have existing LC Transit service to Metro. The service to Wiehle is replacing previous buses that went to West Falls Church—so the service from those locations is not really new.

Second, the biggest obstacle to provide any additional service from Dulles South right now is the lack of available parking. We cannot provide additional bus capacity without more parking spaces. As many of you know from previous newsletters, the County is constructing a new park and ride lot at East Gate. My goal is for that lot to be the hub for Metro service from Dulles South - once the Route 50 construction project has been completed. We have also begun working on another park and ride lot, which will be next to the existing lot in Stone Ridge. This additional lot will help provide increased access to that area.

I've been asked why those particular locations were chosen, and not South Riding itself. The locations we're using for park and ride lots are designated public use sites that were provided by developers during construction of the communities and at no cost to the County. At the time that most of South Riding was built, LC Transit had very little service and public use sites for transit were not designated in the community plans.

As a reminder, Phase II of the Silver Line will extend into Loudoun by 2019, with stations in the median of the Greenway at Route 606 and Route 772 near Loudoun County Parkway.

Joining me in the picture below with one of our new buses at the Wiehle Avenue transit center is Paul Mounier, the new Loudoun County Transit Manager. Paul will be overseeing the entire LC Transit system – including our long haul fleet of more than 60 buses. He comes to us from Fairfax, where he helped run the Fairfax Connector bus system and developed the new Metro service plan, which was the most significant change to service plans in that system's history. I look forward to working with Paul to bring more service to Dulles South.



LEGISLATIVE

Home Daycare Ordinance Exceptions

Home daycares provide an essential service to many families in Loudoun. Due to recent changes in the Code of Virginia, I initiated a change to the County's Zoning Ordinance requirements that brings our code in concert with state rules for home based daycares. Under the County's zoning ordinance, home daycare centers in single family homes that meet certain requirements can have up to 12 children, while those in townhomes can have up to 9. A provider can submit a Minor Special Exception application to request a modification of the Ordinance to exclude their own children when calculating the number of permitted children. In addition, those in townhomes can request permission for up to 12 children.

When these special exception requests are filed, County staff does a full analysis, including looking at parking and logistics. The Board has received three requests thus far, all from townhome owners seeking 12 children. All three were approved. However, I voted against two of the requests. Generally speaking, I am not supportive of 12 children in a townhome, which I fear could have a significant impact on neighbors. In the case of the first two applications, I thought that County staff had done an incomplete evaluation of the parking situations in those communities. Staff has since revised their method of evaluation.

I do expect to receive several of these requests from the Dulles District in the coming months. When they are made, immediate neighbors are contacted and invited to participate in the legislative process. I will evaluate each application on a case by case basis, but my burden for support will be fairly high.

Bond Referendum

The Board of Supervisors voted to place several items on a bond referendum this November. I disagreed with the Board's approach in one area, but was in the minority.

The Board voted to place three questions on the ballot: one related to public safety, one related to parks, recreation and library projects, and one related to new schools in the Dulles North area, and the Academies of Loudoun. Specifically, the \$34.6 million bond for public safety would fund the construction of an animal shelter, fire and rescue apparatus such as Haz-Mat Support Units and additional ambulances, and the costs associated with a replacement station for the Sterling Park Rescue Squad. The Parks, Recreation, and Library bond for \$10.9 million is to cover the costs involved in renovating the Sterling Library and Sterling Community Center. Finally, the school projects bonds includes the construction of one Dulles North elementary school, one Dulles North middle school, and the Advanced Technology Academy - for a total of \$162.9 million.

I disagreed with grouping the school projects together. The schools in the Dulles North area are extremely crowded, and the Board of Supervisors and the School Board has decided to build new ones to alleviate crowding. Approving the bond question will allow us to get better financing, but if the bonds are rejected, we will still have to find a way to build these schools.

The Academy of Loudoun project, however, is different. The Academies will be our new high school that will offer STEM, technology and vocational educational opportunities for our students. Make no mistake—I support this project as well. We have more than enough talented students to fill this kind of school and we'll no longer be reliant on slots at Thomas Jefferson for more advanced opportunities. The School Board's vision is for students to alternate days at this school and maintain a seat at their "home" school, which I do have concerns about. But either way, this project is not a "need" in the same way that the Dulles North schools are. It is also very expensive. I am concerned that by placing all the schools together, the financing for the other school projects could be at risk. I ultimately believe that voters in Loudoun will want to make this investment as well, but I thought that they should have the opportunity to vote on this project separately. However, my motion to separate the school questions failed on a 6-3 vote.

Evermont Trace Rezoning

Our Board has fought hard to slow the amount of residential units that are approved in the County. This allows us the opportunity to slow growth and concentrate on updating our infrastructure and better diversify our tax base.

Earlier this month the Board approved a new residential development on the southern part of Belmont Ridge Road, near the new fire station. This land was originally zoned for commercial and industrial purposes. I am very frustrated by the Board's approval on this and would go so far as to say this is the worst decision this Board has made during the current term.

While 90 new homes is not an overwhelming number, I am concerned about the precedent this decision sets, which will pave the way for hundreds more homes in an extremely congested area. The area is less than 3 miles away from the center line of Runway 30 at Dulles Airport.

Furthermore, rezoning commercial and industrial land – which is revenue positive for the County – to residential, which is revenue negative – should not be done without an extremely compelling reason, which there was not in this case.

There is already an additional application for several hundred homes on an adjoining parcel. This decision may force the Board's hand on that application—and that one will have a major impact on County services, schools, and roads. For over a decade, Shreveport Drive in Brambleton had been the line for residential development. This was part of previous approvals, including the current Brambleton Master Plan.

The Boards 5-4 decision now calls all of that into question. This rezoning received a unanimous recommendation of denial from the Planning Commission and was strongly opposed by County staff. Joining me in opposing this rezoning were Chairman York, Vice Chairman Williams, and Supervisor Buona.

DULLES DISTRICT

Vanpool & Commuter Bus Advisory Board

The County's long haul service continues to be extremely popular – ridership has increased by 40 percent over the last year in Dulles South. Due to the high rate of demand there is a shortage of parking spaces and seats on buses. In the short term, we are working with Stone Ridge on the construction of another park and ride lot near the existing one and launching vanpool services to meet the demand. As mentioned early, we're also constructing a new park and ride lot at East Gate.

To further alleviate overcrowding, the County is considering the addition of a fixed route bus (multiple stops) to the Dulles area. I was able to get a route included in the County's master plan submitted to the Commonwealth, and surveys were conducted earlier this summer to help determine the level of interest and stops for bus service.

We're also going to try a new approach—the formation of commuter vanpools and carpools. This fall a pilot program, helping Dulles South citizens join or form commuter vanpools, will be launched. The County's Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure will be spearheading this effort and will be seeking to facilitate the creation of these pools. More information on vanpools is on the Loudoun County website at loudoun.gov/commute. Anyone interested in learning more about joining or forming a carpool

or vanpool, may contact rideshare@loudoun.gov with the subject line “Dulles South vanpools” or call 703-771-5665.

Also, I will have an upcoming vacancy on the County’s Commuter Bus Advisory Board. This board acts in an advisory capacity to the Board of Supervisors on policy and operational matters as they pertain to the system of buses which operate between the County and the Washington D.C. area. The Commuter Bus Advisory Board is aware of day-to-day problems and provides a forum to discuss them in detail. When appropriate the board makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. The Board generally meets once a month. If you are interested in applying, please send your resume to matt.letourneau@loudoun.gov.

Board Seeks Funds for Bull Run Post Office Road Improvements

As I mentioned before, I am working to obtain funds to pave Bull Run Post Office Road. The road was included in the Board’s six year paving plan for Loudoun County, at a cost of over \$8 million. Since that time, the General Assembly intervened and changed the formula for road paving projects in a way that negatively impacts the amount available for Loudoun. At my request, VDOT’s engineers have been working to reduce the cost of the BRPO paving project to better fit it into available funding. An alternate design is being advanced that won’t widen the road as much as planned but will improve conditions.

In the meantime, VDOT has a new program available that will help with funding. After a thorough analysis of all County paving projects (and there are many), Transportation Staff found that BRPO is the most likely to qualify for state assistance from the new program based on traffic volume and need. This month, the Board of Supervisors approved the request.

I continue to work with Delegate Ramadan and County staff to put together the funding needed for BRPO paving. I’m hopeful we will receive this state assistance which will help get us closer.

Board of Supervisors Honors National Geographic Bee Champion

I was pleased to welcome Akhil Rekulapelli to the Board Room to present him with a Resolution of Commendation from the Board of Supervisors in honor of his first place finish in the National Geographic Bee.



Chairman Scott York, Supervisor Letourneau, and Akhil and his family.

Akhil placed first in the Virginia Geographic Bee, which enabled him to compete against students from all fifty states and territories at the national bee in May. He placed first out of more than four million students who participated across the United States and territories. Akhil's first place finish earned him a \$50,000 scholarship and a trip to the Galapagos with National Geographic's Lindblad Expeditions. He is a rising freshman at Thomas Jefferson High School.

Started in 1989, the Bee tests students' knowledge of various geographic categories including culture, economics, politics, and many other facets. The Bee is open to students in fourth through eighth grade. I read the final two questions from the Bee – suffice to say Akhil was probably the only person in the room that knew the answers! Congratulations Akhil!

North Star & Belmont Ridge Intersection Study

The Northstar/Belmont Ridge Road intersection is situated between Briar Woods High School and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) headquarters, which also has community athletic fields on the property. The intersection has seen congestion and some accidents.

This month the Board supported a request from Blue Ridge District Supervisor Janet Clarke to identify potential funding options for a traffic signal warrant study, and design and construction services for a proposed traffic signal installation, if a light is warranted. We also asked staff to provide interim safety improvements that could be implemented at the intersection until the results of the study are complete.

LCSO Warns of Phone Scams

While phone scams have been around for quite some time, lately, the Sheriff's department has been experiencing far more. The caller is typically saying you or a family member has done something wrong, such as missing a court date, failing to pay taxes, or not showing up for jury duty. The caller then explains the only way to avoid the punishment is to pay a fine. Frequently they request that the "fines" be paid using an electronic MoneyPak order or a "Green Dot Card". The scammer can then use these cards to electronically transfer the funds.

Unfortunately, victims have sometimes followed these instructions, paying hundreds and thousands of dollars to the scammer. The Sheriff's department wants to warn the public of these scams in an effort to raise awareness. Even if you have committed an offense, law enforcement officials will not contact you by phone to collect payment.

Residents who think that they may have been a victim of a telephone scam should contact the Sheriff's non-emergency number (703-777-1021) or file a report online at www.sheriff.loudoun.gov/reportonline.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dulles South Food Pantry

The Dulles South Food Pantry is a multi-faith emergency food pantry. We provide nutritious food, personal supplies and other services to those in need in Dulles South and the surrounding area who come to us regardless of income, faith or other criteria. We are an all-volunteer organization focused both on feeding the hungry and promoting the self-sufficiency of those we serve. Donations to the Dulles South Food Pantry are tax deductible

The Dulles South Food Pantry needs canned chicken & tuna; soups and stews with protein; 2 or 5 lbs bags of rice or rice mixes; pasta; boxed potatoes; breakfast cereal and pancake mix; granola bars; fruit (in cans, plastic or dried); canned beans; pasta sauce (no glass please); seasoning packets; toothpaste; shampoo; and grocery store gift cards in any amount. We are now able to accept food donations at Dulles South Multipurpose Center located at **24950 Riding Center Drive in South Riding, Virginia during business hours.**

The Dulles South Food Pantry is open to distribute food the 1st, 3rd and 5th Wednesdays of the month from 5 pm to 8 pm located at 24757 Evergreen Mill Road, Dulles VA 20166

For additional information please visit our website at www.dsfp.org.